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2 February 1952

Food Situation in Lithuania

The availability of food to the population during the 1951-52 consumption year^{1/} will be below prewar but conditions will not be critical. This estimate is based on the assumption that the usual proportion of the harvest will be available to the population and that no artificial famine will be created by abnormally large amounts of agricultural products allocated by the government to stockpiles or export.

Production of the basic foodstuffs, grain and potatoes, for 1951 was below prewar while livestock products are undoubtedly still in short supply due to wartime losses and the usual stresses of the recent collectivization. The per capita production of grain for 1951 is estimated to be 342 kilograms which is only 62 percent of prewar^{2/} but is 110 percent of 1950. This reduction of grain availability in comparison to prewar is not so serious when it is realized that a good portion of prewar grain production was consumed in the form of livestock products which have been of decreasing importance in the postwar diet.

The reports of food shortages and possible starvation from the Lithuanian viewpoint probably reflect a decrease in availability of livestock products such as meat, butter, eggs, and milk and on the increasing importance of such staples as grain and potatoes in the diet.

Although high consumption of livestock products makes for a well balanced diet and usually indicates a high standard of living the Soviets have probably adopted the usual policy of reducing the Lithuanian diet to the Russian level, e.g. predominantly grain and potatoes.

1. August 1, 1951 - July 31, 1952.
2. 1933-37 average.

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With the peasant population ninety percent collectivized the Soviet policy of taking a greater proportion of foodstuffs away from the producers can be expected to become more forceful. The stresses and strains of implementing this policy will give rise to pessimistic reports and make it more difficult to evaluate the actual situation.

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